THE

TOILET, &c.

No. V.

SATURDAY, February 14, 1801.

In this ſcowling month of February, it may not be unpleaſant for the tittering daughter of jollity, to anticipate the bloſſoms of May, and parry from the tranquil and innocent breaſt, the rude attacks of chilling gloom. The exhilarating feſtivals of life would ſoon ceaſe to cheer and delight, could remembrance drop her yellow ſtraw, and oblivion weave her ſooty veil, to frighten from the ſoul the little monitors of recollection. 'Tis they who cheat the howling blaſt of half its gall, and offer in ſcented cluſters the thouſand ſweets, which once regaled the fancy in the happy roundelays of gaity and mirth. By them, without the proceſs of reiterated ceremony, the imagination floats o'er the paſt with pleaſure and improvement, and by the combination of probabilities, paints the picture of future acts, of ſeaſons and events. And thus, in hoping, from what has ſatisfactorily paſt, for what ſhall come to ſatisfy, the preſent evil is a feather, and the whiſtling of the gale an inſtrument of *ten ſtrings* to announce the dawn of your approaching bliſs.

THE PLEASURES OF TASTE.

THAT ſenſibility to the beauties of nature, which is ſometimes obſervable among ignorant men, may be defined, a *natural taſte*, as diſtinguiſhed from that which is the reſult of a habit of ſelecting and comparing, and thence acquiring a nice perception of beauty and deformity by the proceſs of education.

'Tis by the latter that we venture to decide on the ſeveral objects of the fine arts, to arrange the different ſpecies of the ſame claſs and mark their diſcriminating characters however minute, increaſe the pleaſure of the imagination by examining a ſeries of ſimple or complex figures, and heighten our reliſh by an infinite variety of ſhade and contraſt.

There is ſcarcely any thing, capable of arrangement, but is, in a degree ſuſceptible of taſte in the execution. The laying out of gardens may be highly ornamental. The ſtructure of our buildings, may be neat and ſometimes elegant. But in nothing is taſte *more frequently* exhibited than in the furniture of a houſe and the arrangement of a table. Theſe, though often ſplendidly elegant, may be taſteful without extravagance; as neatneſs and a certain genteel diſpoſition, may comport with ſlender materials.

This artificial taſte is exceedingly pleaſing where it is uncorrupted by a faſtidious attention to minuteneſs, yet as being very limited, and having few objects on which the fancy can expand itſelf, it fails of producing any of thoſe emotions, which natural ſcenes are perpetually exciting, becauſe when once the arrangement is made, every thing on which it was exerciſed is at a ſtand, while in a garden or a field, nature is continually ſhoot-

ing forward, and diverſifying, by giving life and luſtre to the objects and ſcenes which we have arranged according to our fancy.

'Tis this ſucceſſion of novelty, which produces that cheerfulneſs ſo apparent in the lovers of the country. When the tribes of vegetables bud and bloſſom, the heart of man expands in uniſon with nature, and if ever it is ſhut againſt offices of benevolence, it cannot be, when the very breathings of nature melt the ſavage into tenderneſs, give his imagination its fineſt play, and abſorb the ſoul in contemplation of that Intelligence, which "breathes in the plant" "refreſhes in the roſe."

Accuſtomed to the manners and habits of large cities, we are often ignorant of the pleaſures, of a country life, and too readily deſpiſe what is incongruous with faſhionable modes; but ſince *durability in mode*, is one criterion of excellence, when the votaries of faſhion produce any thing not liable to viciſſitude, we will readily acknowledge it to be the offspring of juſt taſte.

Certain it is, that the taſte of faſhionable life, is dependent on too many extraneous circumſtances to afford permanent pleaſure. To judge from obſervation, one would think that more depends on the opinion of other people than on our own; and the moſt elegant arrangement either of houſe, table, or perſon, give pleaſure to the artiſt, only through the medium of gueſts. 'Tis true indeed, a feminine fancy may be gratified by capriciouſly changing the poſition of the furniture, or altering the mode of dreſs, yet after all, the catalogue of inſenſible objects is ſoon learned, and the mirror that reflected the countenance of yeſterday, varies no expreſſion of features to day.

'Tis not only novelty in rural objects which engages our hearts, and acquaintance with them, begun in early life makes us recognize them at a diſtant period, as old friends from whom we have been long ſeparated. I have, therefore, always conſidered a youthful acquaintance with the country as uſeful to every man. To ſay nothing of the ſatisfaction a man may take in viſiting the ſcenes of innocence and youth, of reſting under the ſhade of the tree or in the grove which he aſſiſted in planting; he there acquires a kind of knowledge which citizens do not poſſeſs, a taſte for nature which cannot be vitiated, and a reſource of amuſement that animates his life.

For theſe reaſons I lead my boys over fields and hedges, pointing out a variety of objects. When they plant acorns and fruit ſeed, I anticipate that if they live, they will derive much ſatisfaction from reſting under the oak and cheſnut planted by their hands, and whoſe age will be noted by their own.

X.

To the EDITOR of the TOILET.

You muſt know Mr. Editor, that I am the daughter of a gentleman who is very fond of reading old newſpapers. This inclination, I have no doubt, took its origin from a kind of family antiquarianiſm, for my grandmother and two aunts that reſide in our houſe, are always talking over the incidents of their youth, and ſeem to relax a little of their cuſtomary ſeverity, when my father reads any paſſage relative to circumſtances with which they were acquainted at the time it happened. Now when I read to them your propoſal to journ-

alize the events of each year, in order to tranſmit to the next century a very particular detail of this, I could not help laughing at the idea of looking over the diary of our family for the laſt hundred years. My dear great grandmother ſeemed immediately before my eyes, with a large black velvet hood hanging gracefully down her ſhoulders, a ſtiff pair of whalebone ſtays reſting on her hips, a richly carved hickory buſk almoſt ſupporting her chin; while her gown, made of ſtiff huckabuck, plaited in even folds, was juſt long enough to allow a pair of white clocked red worſted ſtockings to be admired as ſhe walked to church on ſundays. Her diary I have no doubt would have been as venerable as her dreſs; ſhe would have noted, as my aunt, has frequently told me, "that courtſhip was as regular as clock work; that her huſband, before he was married, always kept at table diſtance, that ſhe ſaw him but once a week, and then her mother was preſent." But to proceed; when I had finiſhed your paper, my aunts began to recount the faſhions that had appeared and paſſed away during *their* pilgrimage, to remark on the ſtrange revolutions that had taken place in forms and manners, and to lament in pathetic tones the degeneracy and extravagance of *theſe* days. "Lord aunt, ſaid I, what a pity it is that we have had no public muſeum in which might have been preſerved the whole equipage of a woman of tip top faſhion, in all its viciſſitudes;" 'pity indeed, my child, for then people might have ſeen a little of the decorum of former years, and would at once have known that the dreſs of governor Phips' time, was the moſt proper and becoming.' 'Well, my *dear* aunt, why can't we begin a muſeum now, we

can muſter in our own family, a ſpecimen of all the modes of dreſs for the laſt century; and as for an account of the manners, opinions and amuſements, it may be compiled from your teſtimony; and then you know, when a muſeum is once opened, there are a great many young ladies that know how to write, and will rummage all the old lumber rooms in their houſes for curioſities, and beſides will be fond of inquiring out their hiſtory for the ſake of writing to the ſociety: We'll have a room for the purpoſe, and invite about twenty to become members, and after rules and regulations are made, we'll advertiſe for donations.' To this my aunt ſubſcribed; a ſociety was formed, and your humble ſervant elected correſponding ſecretary. And now Mr. Editor, I propoſe furniſhing the Toilet from time to time, with an account of the curioſities, and communications, that may be made to the ſociety; but I muſt, previouſly obſerve, that I have too many avocations to attend at all to the labor of correcting what I write, and though I have had the advantage of the new ſyſtem of ſchool education, have learned the young Ladies' Accidence, and can parſe tolerably well, my brother is always criticiſing my ſentences: But it does not ſignify, I had rather talk a whole day, and write a whole night, than ſtudy or tranſcribe and correct for one hour. Sir,

Your ſervant,

HARRIOT TOWNSEND.

Mr. Editor,

As I was reclined on my pillow, at the hour "when mortals the ſweets of forgetfulneſs prove," my reflec-

tions were directed towards the Toilet and the Fair. For you muſt know, that I am a ſincere lover of the female, and conſequently a friend to the Toilet, and therefore, it is no wonder I ſhould think of them.

On reading your proſpectus, I felt the moſt pleaſing ſenſations, and am animated with a zeal for your ſucceſs in the undertaking. It is truly praiſe worthy; and I flatter myſelf will be conducted in ſuch a manner, as to touch the female heart, to foment the decaying ſpark till it kindle to a flame; and ſhe finds her mind with all its powers invigorated and refined, elevated to where it ought to be, above the ſtars.

It ſeems you are not inſenſible that there is no ſituation in which a man can be placed, but he will find diſcouragements to encounter, and obſtacles to ſurmount: And, perhaps, Sir, the nobler his views, the greater impediments he finds in his way; but he that is calculated for great achievements, feels the force of his powers accumulating in proportion to the magnitude of his difficulties. He clothes himſelf with *prudence*, *patience*, *juſtice* and *fortitude*, goes on his way rejoicing, peace in his heart, and victory in his arm.

I have had the pleaſure of ſeeing the little ſtranger you have ſent abroad, to viſit in a particular manner the fair. I hope they will treat him with tenderneſs, and entertain him with cordiality; for they muſt not forget, that by entertaining ſtrangers, ſome have entertained angels unawares, and this may prove an angel of light to their minds.

To your care and protection, ye virtuous females, this little ſtranger is dedicated. I truſt you will not ſuffer the dark ſhade of your frowns to wither the opening bloſſoms of his mind, nor "cold penury to freez

the genial current of his ſoul," till he ſink to that tomb, where the Nightingale that ſung ſo ſweetly, and the Tablet that bloomed with ſo much beauty were untimely hurried. But that you will breathe on him the refreſhing dew of Hermon, and ſmile on him the vivifying beams of the ſun.

PETRARCH.

LINES TO MISS M * * *.

FAIR M * * * thou haſt more than human art,
To wake the fineſt feelings of the heart,
For thou canſt touch with ſkill divine that ſtring,
That makes the bard forget himſelf and ſing.
Melifluous is the ſound of thy ſoft notes,
While on the ear the enchanting muſic floats,
The paſſions of the ſoul with rapture move,
And own thy melody is food for love.
The dulleſt mind thy melting ſtrains inſpire,
Turn grief to joy, indifference to deſire,
And as thy voice moſt lovely girl I hear,
"I am all tranſport, ecſtacy and ear."
But when is view'd thy dignity of form,
Thy blooming virtues and thy powers to charm,
The muſes bluſh, in all their bright array,
And at thy feet their wreaths of glory lay.

PETRARCH.

WERE all the evils to happen, on the next day, which ill-humor collects during one eaſtwardly ſtorm, we ſhould find ſociety changed to an aſſembly of infernals. But, happily for ourſelves, it is impoſſible fully to realize either the beatitude, or miſery, which is chalked out by the finger of phrenzy in the hours of giddy inſanity.